

## **VOLUME 1, ISSUE 9**

### **LEGISLATIVE EMAIL UPDATE**

Thank you to all of you who take your time to read my "In the Loop" legislative email update. If you have any suggestions or thoughts on any of the information provided or issues of concern to you please contact me or my staff at my toll free number: (866) 262 7307. Your input is more than welcome and always regarded.

### **SHOW YOUR SUPPORT WITH MERIT SCHOLAR BUMPER STICKERS**

"Proud Parent of a Merit Scholar" bumper stickers are now available to Michigan Merit Award Scholarship winners in the 7th District.

"This award impacts a large number of students in my district who work hard in school and want to further their education. Last year alone, over 1700 students in the 7th District were awarded \$4,380,000 through the Michigan Merit Award Scholarship," Patterson stated. "Not only does the scholarship encourage students to work hard, it rewards their meritorious accomplishment. As the presiding officer in the House when the Merit bill passed, I take exceptional pride in the success of the Merit program."

As the originator of the bumper sticker idea, Senator Patterson encourages parents to support their child's achievement by placing a Merit bumper sticker on their vehicle. Please contact Sen. Patterson's office by calling the toll-free number (866) 262-7307, or by e-mail at [SenBPatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:SenBPatterson@senate.michigan.gov) to obtain a sticker. Quantities are limited and will be distributed on a first-come, first-serve basis.

The Michigan Merit Award Scholarship Program has helped more than 140,000 students make college more affordable since the program was created through Republican leadership in 2000.

### **PATTERSON WINS ROUND ONE**

This article appeared in MIRS, a capitol news service.

Sen. Bruce PATTERSON (R-Canton) succeeded today in his efforts to prevent a women's prison in his western Wayne County district from being expanded by 400 beds, at least for now.

The Fiscal Year (FY) 2003 budget supplemental passed in the Senate today had included plans to tack a 400-bed unit onto the Scott Correctional Facility in Northville Township before the Department of Corrections (DOC) runs out of beds for its female prisoners. But Patterson's amendment to strike out the provision passed and Democratic efforts to reinsert it failed along party lines.

Whether that position will stick through the Republican legislature's target negotiations with the administration, however, is yet to be determined.

There are around 2,163 female prisoners in the state system but DOC only has 2,221 beds for them. In response, the Senate had proposed to set aside \$4.8 million this year to build a new wing at the Scott prison for them.

The other option being floated about is building a 336-bed unit at Camp Brighton, but sewer issues at that location are proving to be a costly problem. To expand Camp Brighton would cost \$10.75 million. Building another prison would cost \$60 million. From the DOC's perspective, expanding the Scott prison is the best and cheapest option.

"It's important to note that this expansion would not expand the perimeter of the facility. The density of it would increase," said Sen. Mickey SWITALSKI (D-Roseville). "I wouldn't want to increase the costs to all of the people of Michigan for prisons."

But Patterson says expanding the Scott prison is not an option. A 1991 Wayne Circuit Court order prohibits the facility from being enlarged or expanded.

"The courts have spoke very succinctly to the fact that there was supposed to be the number of beds," Patterson said. "And while Northville Township is greatly expanding, they feel they have made enough room for these neighbors and they have judgments that support their decisions."

If the state wants to save money, it should not pursue the Scott option because it will have to defend its position in court, Patterson said.

DOC, Patterson's office and residents in Northville and neighboring Plymouth Township met yesterday on the subject.

"We're going to continue to dialogue with the residents," said DOC spokesman Leo LALONDE. "We badly need beds for women and it's much cheaper to build a \$4.8 million expansion than a \$60 million prison. The dialogue will continue."

### **WELL DRILLING PROJECT STIRS REFUGE ISSUES**

Mason Tract oil and gas plan spotlights need to protect wilderness areas, senator says  
By John Bebow / The Detroit News

As the Chair of Technology and Energy, Senator Bruce Patterson hosted a meeting in Grayling, Mich. to discuss the drilling of natural gas and oil near the Mason Tract. If interested, please click here:

<http://www.detnews.com/2003/metro/0307/11/c01214943.htm>

### **HEALTH INSURANCE REFORM APPROVED**

Patterson measure clears Senate; awaits governor's approval

Proclaiming a victory for workers and small businesses, the state Senate approved a measure to reform small group market health insurance designed to encourage economic growth by creating more pricing competition among insurance carriers. The bill,

sponsored by Senator Bruce Patterson, R - Canton, was presented to the governor on July 9, 2003. She has 14 days from July 9, 2003 to approve the bill.

"Small businesses need help now to deal with double-digit cost increases in health insurance premiums," said Sen. Bruce Patterson. "Small businesses simply cannot continue to absorb premium increases like those experienced during the last five years. Inaction is not an option."

The bill incorporates many changes developed by the National Association of Insurance Commissioners. Those changes proved effective in other states, including the essential mechanism: "rate bands" used to bring stability to the small group risk pool. However, this bill also addresses the unique nature of Michigan's small group market by recognizing that aging demographics have a profound impact.

One of the Legislature's primary concerns was the abusive practice of "cherry picking". "Cherry picking" is the scheme by which insurance providers insure young, healthy worker over older, less healthy workers. "Cherry picking" results in the older, less healthy workers being pushed onto Blue Cross Blue Shield of Michigan (BCBSM) - Traditional, the insurer of last resort. This practice results in the rising costs of everyone's health insurance.

A coalition of business associations and local chambers of commerce representing more than 70,000 small businesses supported the legislation.

### **MICHIGAN RECOGNIZES LOCAL HEROES**

Patterson's "American Heroes Week" bill Passes Both Chambers; Awaits Governor's Approval

The "American Heroes Week" bill (Senate Bill 578) unanimously passed the Senate and House Chambers and was presented to the governor on July 10, 2003 for passage, announced Senator Bruce Patterson (R-Canton, 7th District). The governor has 14 days from July 10, 2003 to sign the bill.

Senate Bill (SB) 578 establishes an act recognizing the many Americans who demonstrated heroism on September 11, 2001 and encourages academic institutions to educate children about hometown heroes and role models. It would fall each year on the week of September 11th. The bill also provides that the Legislature recognize the many ordinary Americans who showed heroism on September 11, 2001, and the days that followed. The legislation was brought to Senator Patterson for sponsorship by RARE (Recognizing Achievement and Rewarding Excellence).

"American Heroes Week is a fitting tribute to the many Americans who display extraordinary acts of selflessness and courage," Patterson stated. "I am pleased to have worked with RARE to bring attention to such a worthy message."

"We are pleased to support Senator Patterson's bill," said Marnie Quinn, Executive Director of The Rare Foundation. "Children must be convinced that they don't need to be

a rock, movie or an athletic star in order to be respected, admired and successful," said Ms. Quinn. "This bill will give educators another reason to teach positive behavior and character traits to their students."

Another strong advocate for this bill is David Brandon, Chairman and CEO of Domino's Pizza. "By emphasizing local community heroes we provide our children and society at large with a vision and a sense of optimism for their own capacity for individual success and achievement." I am pleased to be associated with something as positive and important as this bill." said Brandon.

### **MICHIGAN RANKS 4TH IN NATION ON HOW WISE IT TAXES AND SPENDS**

In case you missed the Cover Story from Monday's USA Today....

Michigan is one of the nation's top states when it comes to how wise it is in taxing and spending.

According to the USA Today, Michigan received an "excellent" rating for how it managed its fiscal affairs for the period of 1997-2002. Michigan received 10 stars out of a possible 12, making it the 4th-best managed state in the nation.

Lowering the tax burden on residents and businesses has placed Michigan at the top of the nation in tax policy, according to a report issued by USA Today this week, Senate Majority Leader Ken Sikkema said. The report analyzed the financial health of each state from 1997 - 2002, determined by three categories: tax system, bond rating and spending restraint. States were assigned up to four stars in each category, with four stars being the highest possible score and one star being the lowest. Michigan received the highest scores possible in the categories of tax system and bond rating, and two stars for spending restraint. Michigan was ranked as the fourth overall best fiscally responsible state behind only Utah, Delaware and Georgia.

### **REDUCE SPAM E-MAIL AT:**

<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/online/edcams/spam/index.html>

Do you receive lots of junk email messages from people you don't know? It's no surprise if you do. As more people use email, marketers are increasingly using email messages to pitch their products and services. Some consumers find unsolicited commercial email - also known as "spam" - annoying and time consuming; others have lost money to bogus offers that arrived in their email in-box. This website has information about the Federal Trade Commission's recent law enforcement actions against deceptive commercial email and spammers who don't honor their "remove me" claims. In the "Consumer Info" section, you'll find tips on how to reduce the amount of spam email in your in-box.

### **ANTI-SPAM MEASURES PASS SENATE**

Internet surfers ranging from small children to senior citizens can breathe a sigh of relief thanks to measures passed by the Senate that protects consumers from unsolicited bulk and commercial email, known as Spam. Senate Bill 357, the "Electronic Mail Solicitation

Act," would create the Electronic Mail Solicitation Program within the Department of Consumer and Industry Services. SB 357 would also require the program to maintain a list of e-mail addresses of people who do not want to receive unsolicited commercial e-mail; require senders of unsolicited commercial e-mail to register with the program and pay a fee; and require senders to include a valid method for recipients to opt-out of future e-mails. House Bill 4519, a companion bill to SB 357, would require all spam advertisement messages to be identified by the insertion of "ADV:" SB 357 awaits consideration from the House of Representatives while HB 4519 was presented to the Governor on 6/30/2003.

#### **PREPAID FUNERAL AND CEMETERY LOOPHOLE CLOSED BY SENATE**

The Senate took action to protect consumers' prepaid funeral arrangements and to require regular inspections of Michigan cemeteries. Senate Bill 512 closes a loophole in Michigan law to allow merchandise classified as "cemetery" goods and services to be escrowed and refundable in the same way that "funeral" merchandise is escrowed and refundable. In addition, SB 512 requires that the prices of prepaid arrangements be disclosed to consumers who are purchasing pre-need or at-need goods and services. SB 513 would require the state cemetery commissioners to inspect the facilities and grounds of a cemetery at least once every three years. Senate Bills 512 and 513 will now be sent to the House of Representatives for consideration.

#### **CONCERNED ABOUT A PIECE OF LEGISLATION OR AN ISSUE?DO YOU WANT OTHERS TO SHARE IN YOUR CONCERN?**

If you are interested in sharing your views on any issues, pieces of legislation or a personal topic of interest with your community, please contact Senator Patterson's office at [senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov) for more information.

#### **SENATE OFFICE & CONTACT INFORMATION**

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#### **CONSTITUENT E-MAIL ADDRESSES**

Please feel free to forward this message on to friends and family.

If you need to sign up for my updates, please email me at [senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov). In an effort to keep residents up to date with what is happening in Lansing, I am asking interested constituents to forward their e-mail address to me, which will be included in my confidential e mail legislative update list.

Considering the state of the economy, electronic mail is an inexpensive and convenient method to transmit information to those who would be interested in receiving legislative updates. I use constituent e mail addresses for newsletters, weekly updates and to seek

input on a variety of issues. You may also visit my website at <http://www.senate.michigan.gov/gop/senator/patterson/>

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me or one of my staff members. Thank you for your continued interest in the legislative activities of the Michigan Senate. Again, should you have questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact me.

**Very truly yours,**

**Bruce Patterson  
State Senator - 7th District**

*If you wish to remove your name from my Legislative E-mail Update list, please respond to this message with "remove" as the subject and your name and your spouse's name (if applicable) in the body of the message. If you have comments, questions, or concerns, please email me at [senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov](mailto:senbpatterson@senate.michigan.gov) or call my toll free number at (866) 262-7307.*